

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## 2ESB 5723

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As Passed Senate, February 14, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to creating the community agricultural worker safety grant program.

**Brief Description:** Creating and funding the community agricultural worker safety grant program.

**Sponsors:** Senators Rasmussen, Clements, Hatfield, Roach, Shin, Morton, Kline, Schoesler, Haugen, Sheldon, Hargrove, Kohl-Welles, Fairley, Honeyford, Franklin, Keiser, Berkey, Kauffman, Kilmer, Jacobsen, Kastama, Benton, Zarelli and Parlette.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/06/07 [DP-WM].

Ways & Means: 2/19/07 [DP].

Passed Senate: 3/14/07, 49-0; 2/14/08, 48-0.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Morton and Shin.

**Staff:** Sam Thompson (786-7413)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Prentice, Chair; Fraser, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Pridemore, Vice Chair, Operating Budget; Brandland, Carrell, Hatfield, Honeyford, Keiser, Kohl-Welles, Oemig, Rasmussen, Roach, Rockefeller, Schoesler and Tom.

**Staff:** Elise Greef (786-7708)

**Background:** The fiscal year 2007-09 State Operating Budget includes \$500,000 for the state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) for pass-through funding to the nonprofit Opportunities Industrialization Center of Washington (OIC), based in Yakima, to provide agricultural workers with training regarding farm skills, English as a second language (ESL), and other matters. The OIC has implemented the program and currently provides training regarding ESL, civics, pesticide use, commercial driver licensing, and machinery and tractor safety. It is suggested that the program be established on a longer-term basis.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Summary of Second Engrossed Bill:** Subject to appropriation, WSDA will administer a community agricultural worker safety grant program. The program will be implemented by the OIC, which may receive up to \$250,000 per year to implement the program. The OIC will work with the agricultural industry to provide training for agricultural workers in tractor and farm machinery skills and safety, pesticide training, adult basic skills, civics, English as a second language, commercial drivers' licensing, and other related topics.

An obsolete section providing that the bill was null and void unless funded in the 2007-09 State Operating Budget was deleted.

The act expires July 1, 2012.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Agriculture & Rural Economic Development):** PRO: The program established in this bill will give local workers an opportunity to gain skills necessary to operate agricultural machinery and also boost local economies. A pilot program in central Washington managed by the OIC in cooperation with the University of Washington and local agricultural machinery vendors has trained 107 workers to acquire useful skills. This program will benefit farmers and farm workers and help prevent work-related accidents. WSDA, rather than the Department of Labor and Industries, should administer the program.

**Persons Testifying (Agriculture & Rural Economic Development):** PRO: Michael Gempler, Washington Growers' League; Gilbert Alvarez, Henry Beauchamp and Ramon Tobias, Opportunities Industrialization Center (OIC) of Washington; Patrick Connor, Washington Farm Bureau.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means):** PRO: There is a shortage of workers in agricultural areas. This bill would help provide workers with necessary skills. The fiscal note needs to be reworked and will not be of this size. This is the first time the Farm Bureau and Growers' League have partnered with a non-profit organization to provide these services. This is a win-win for the farming community and farm workers.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Senator Rasmussen; Representative Mary Skinner; Dan Fazio, Washington Farm Bureau; Gilbert Alaniz, Henry Beauchamp, Opportunities Industrialization Center of Washington.